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ABSTRACT

This speech traces the inception and the operation of an accountability program in the Columbus, Ohio, public schools. The need to comply with the mandated evaluation requirement of ESEA Title I programs and to respond to a demand from the educational community that they be advised of the progress of these programs alerted the Columbus public schools to the fact that their system lacked proper performance evaluation tools. The evaluation of these programs was contracted, therefore, to the Ohio State University Evaluation Center. The speech explains how the evaluation center has operationalized accountability and presents the policies, processes, and product of the evaluation effort. (Author/JF)

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CASE STUDY OF:

AN ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Presented to the

New Jersey School Boards Association
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by

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CASE STUDY OF
AN ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The old adage about the weather, "Everyone talks about it, but nobody does anything about it," could be applied to accountability as well. Have you tried looking up accountability in any of the standard reference works? We've tried, and find the following kinds of entries:

In the Dictionary of the Social Sciences, accountability is cross-referenced to responsibility, where we find

> "Answerability implies (a) accountability, which focuses attention on the sanctions or procedures by which public officials may be held to account for their actions, e.g. electoral defeat; legislative investigation and publicity with attendant loss of reputation; executive removal, demotion, deprivation of promotion or privileges; judicial process, liability, etc. Other authorities emphasize (b) discretionary capacity implicit in a public role or office which the occupant feels required or is expected to fulfill over and beyond his formal, legal authority. A third denotation refers to (c) a professional,

> group, or legal standard of performance by which the holder of a public trust considers himself bound. A fourth is that of (d) loyalty to a determinate or indeterminate, personal or institutional, source of authority, from which emanates a material-ideological interpretation of the ends that the official structure of authority is supposed to serve, and to which official incumbents render obedience."*

This defining process goes on for three more sections. It would be nice and scientific and scholarly to say that we started from a clearly defined concept of accountability and systematically planned and implemented it in operational terms and behaviors. In truth, we have not done so.

In fact, passage and implementation of Title I, ESEA programs in early 1966 provided one impetus for knowing whether programs were working, were meeting objectives. The mandated evaluation requirement of Title I, ESEA brought a realization to the Columbus Public Schools, and hundreds of other systems as well, that the capacity to perform evaluation was nonexistent in the school system. The evaluation of these programs was contracted to the Ohio State University Evaluation Center. This contract was for two and one-half years, and provided for program evaluation, research in evaluation, training of in-resident school system personnel in evaluation, and finally, the installation of an evaluation capacity in the school system.

We were not using the term accountability then. We were, however, aware that the State Department of Education had to report to the U.S. Office of Education on the success or failure of titled projects. We, in turn, had to report to the State Department. At the same time, people in the educational community (administrators, board members, teachers, parents, and

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*Julius Gould and William L. Kolb, eds., A Dictionary of the Social Sciences (New York: The Free Press, 1964).

even students) began asking, "How well are these programs doing?" As long as the OSU Evaluation Center was performing the evaluation, the data and reports, under the terms of the contract, were the property of the Columbus Public Schools. We were many times asked, "How are these projects doing?" by the news media, by citizens' groups and by classroom teachers (from whom we collected data) and had to respond, "We can't give you that information. See the school system about it." Reports, of which there had been multiple reports prepared for distribution, disappeared, without having been distributed.

The community, particularly the inner-city, but not limited to that area, began increasing pressure on the schools for information about how well students did on achievement tests. Each school in the system administered achievement tests at certain grade levels. Schools were permitted to select any one of three achievement batteries, or combination of subtests therein. Individual student test results were not released or shown to parents. Concern over how well the schools were doing, with the amounts being spent per pupil by school, with balancing school staff and student bodies racially, generated community pressure. This pressure was exerted on school classroom teachers, building principals, central office administrators and the Board of Education. The Board of Education was asked to have a team of experts, not associated with the school system, conduct a study. Civil rights groups and Board members could not agree on experts, and finally accepted the offer of President Fawcett to provide the resources of the Ohio State University to make the study. This study, which was chaired by Vern Cunningham, was conducted from mid-March and completed by June, 1968. It is difficult to capture the flavor of a 322-page report in a few minutes.

However, a thread which runs through the entire report is woven of accountability, responsibility, and responsiveness. One might characterize the description of the system being studied as a "closed" system, and the recommendations made as being institutional changes toward accomplishing an open system.

One chapter of this report was entitled "School System Assessment and Accountability." The summary of this chapter states:

> Most people are interested in how their own youngsters fare in school. They are likewise interested in how well their school system is achieving its mission. Questions about how schools rank in comparison to other schools too are often raised. Such questions are asked honestly and humbly and represent a very modest request. What most people do not realize, however, is that evaluating an institution as complex as a school system is a most difficult assignment. This is true whether it is done internally by the staff or by an outside group.

A comprehensive evaluation of the Columbus Schools was not the assignment of the Commission. Our attention was focused on problem areas, one of which was the need for continuing assessment of the system. Three recommendations are made in this regard.

An Office of Evaluation and Research was authorized in May, 1968, by the Board of Education. The Commission is encouraged to note this development and commends the board and administration on the purposes and objectives chosen for that office. Our first recommendation is that the Board support this office generously.

Second, we urge that school district policy on the sharing of test results be revised to allow for an annual report on school achievement. Such a report should include such items as follow-up information on graduates, changes in pupil achievement, new types of testing that are being tried, characteristics of the student body being served, and where appropriate, comparisons with other school systems.

Third, we recommend that regional sub-district school assessment committees be established in 1968-69 as a part of the general recommendations for decentralization which are made later in the report. There is a genuine need in all school systems for improved ways of developing community understanding about schools

> and school understanding about communities. To repeat, many people want information, they want to understand, they want to take part and, above all, they want to be confident about the quality of education their children are receiving. The regional assessment committees would have leading laymen, teachers, administrators, and students as members. They would meet each month and report at least annually to the Board of Education and to local building PTA's and other community groups.*

What has happened since that report to make the Columbus Public Schools accountable?

The authorized office for Evaluation and Research was installed as a department within the Division of Special Services in September, 1968. Virtually all of the personnel who had been trained at the OSU Evaluation Center were attracted to the school system, and formed the core of the new department. These persons included professionals, secretaries and clerical workers (called MAT's--manual analysis technicians). All but the director of the office and the classified office manager were supported by funds for Title I evaluation and State AFDC programs. The General Fund local budget for the initial installation was about $25,000 on an annual basis.

However, another recommendation of the report cited called for passage of an operating levy to implement program improvements, teacher salary leveis. This levy passed, and the Department of Evaluation and Research was given a "green light" to implement the second phase of our five-year plan. This phase included the recruiting and selection of professional staff to provide for evaluation (and research) capabilities for the system at large. Simultaneously, our General Fund staff of one was developing the format of

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*Luvern L. Cunningham, et al., A Report to the Columbus Board of Education, "Recommendations of: The Ohio State University Advisory Commission on Problems Facing the Columbus Public Schools," June, 1968.

the first Columbus School Profile, evaluating the advisory and assessment committees, meeting and talking with a multitude of community groups, and consulting with system personnel on evaluation problems.

We received authorization from the Board of Education to employ the equivalent of 14 full-time professionals, and three interns, who were one-half time students in doctoral programs at OSU. Most of these persons had been trained and taught in the classroom, then taken advanced degree work. Staff members ranged from brand new bachelor's degree teachers with undergraduate minors in research, master's degree candidates and Ph.D. candidates. Areas represented, besides educational research are: social work, sociology, nursing, psychology, curriculum development, information science, administration and political science. Assimilating and molding this group of highly motivated persons into a team has been an exciting challenge--which nas not ceased to be a challenge.

Obviously; the personnel for the department were specifically recruited to meet needs for certain skills and competencies, some of which we could identify easily, such as design and statistics. Others we are still identifying. As we were recruiting, the question we kept discussing was, "What is the role of the department?" The early, simplistic answer was, "We're going to evaluate, so that the school system can be accountable."

Accountability

The whole question of accountability has four basic parameters: to whom, by whom, for what and in what way. We are all familiar with accountability for money, what I would call the "old accountability."

Under the old accountability, we were accountable to the public, more specifically, the taxpayer, for the right, proper, and judicious use of public

monies in the discharge of our duties as public educators. Accountability, by whom, was legally a responsibility of the Boards of Education. Accountability, for what, was for the inputs into education, the dollars received from the taxpayers and expended on educational programs, buildings, equipment, materials, and personnel. Accountability, in what way, was a matter of budgeting, keeping account of expenditures, avoiding deficit expenditures, facilitated by a methodology of double entry bookkeeping or accounting.

Under the "new accountability" a new dimension has been added. No longer are we solely concerned with inputs. There is ample evidence that millions of dollars have been put into education which have had no noticeable impact on education. There is nothing to prevent this from continuing unless or until we become concerned with output. In the jargon of the military, this has been simplified into the phrase "more bang for the buck." I am not here to convince you that this output dimension is more important than fiscal accounting. Nevertheless, across the nation, in the legislatures, in the State Departments of Education, in the communities, among pressure groups there is concern with the output of education. Accountability, the new accountability, is an accountability to not only the taxpayer, the public, but parents and students, as well. This accountability is not only by the Boards of Education, but administrators and classroom teachers. Accountability is not just for input, in dollars, but for output, in terms of units learned, in terms of post school accomplishments. The facilitating method for this accountability is not a simple double entry bookkeeping system which keeps track of dollars, but a system which keeps track of output--and in time, will have to relate input to output.

Accountability is like a double edged sword. That is, not all of our school outputs are good, nor are they all bad. They are both positive and negative. It's necessary to admit the areas that need improvement, as well as provide information about the successes you're having. The negative reports not only help identify problem areas which generate support for needed change, but enhance the positive reports, make them more credible.

A recent Saturday Review carries a cartoon which has a subtle indication of why accountability is necessary--A man, overhearing his wife's coffee klatsch obviously discussing their concern over sex education comments:

> What's to worry about? They'll teach sex like they do the rest of the subjects and the kids will lose interest.
>
> Saturday Review, 12-13-69

The Columbus Public Schools established the Department of Evaluation and Research as a response to the problem of accountability. Information is a significant part of accountability.

Evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives.* It's useful to remember the acronym DOPI--for delineating, obtaining and providing information.

Educational evaluation is being defined as a process, essentially continuing as long as there is something about which information is needed for making decisions. A process is on-going, does not happen at just one or two points in time.

This process of delineating, obtaining and providing information is to reduce uncertainty, and therefore risk, in decision-making.

I believe that this major bias of mine--What is evaluation?--that evaluation is so closely interactive with decision-making, has so much

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*Definition used by Phi Delta Kappa Monograph Committee.

"What's to worry about? They'll teach sex like they do the rest of the subjects and the kids will lose interest."

69

12-13-69 Saturday Review

influence on a formulation of an evaluation department that you should be aware of it. The professional evaluator tends to resist being the "tool" of a decision-maker. There is something nefarious, and perhaps Machiavellian about the role. However, one must reconsider the definition of decision-maker.

It is essential to consider the term educational community. An educational community consists of those persons in a community who have an interest in education--parents, teachers, students, administrators, and often, just interested citizens. Each of these categories represents a set of educational decision-makers. Parents decide to support and reinforce a school--or not, as the case may be. Teachers make decisions about decisions--they may follow administrative directives or covertly ignore them. Students choose to learn or not learn, as reflected in their level of motivation. Citizens affirm school goals, programs and progress through their approval of money issues at the polls. Other groups have other means of expressing their satisfactions and dissatisfactions with the schools.

The evaluator is concerned with improving educational opportunities for children and also providing information to members of the educational community so that they might have an awareness and understanding of these educational opportunities.

Many equate information with public relations, or with the "trade puffery" familiar in advertising. The information with which the evaluator is concerned is not imaginary nor should it be "puffery." Anyone examining the situation, using the same instruments, the same criteria and the same analyses, should be able to derive the same results. In short, evaluators must be credible.

The evaluator finds himself as a middleman. He does not have an "ideal" set of criteria to use in evaluating all programs. One man's criterion is another's poison! He must evaluate, not to tell an audience what it wants to hear, but to satisfy their need for information. Their need for information varies from audience to audience, dependent upon their value structure, their life style, their economic and educational concerns. Thus, the evaluator has a multivariate problem with multiple criteria.

With this understanding, you can group some of the reasons for the charges of "whitewashing," of irrelevancy, of obfuscation. If the evaluator determines the criteria for an evaluation, he may well be overlooking criteria of importance to some audience. Thus, he must attempt not only to identify these audiences beforehand, but must be involved with these audiences so that they identify their criteria to be satisfied as well as become familiar with the criteria of other concerned audiences. These criteria may not be formally identified, but picked up unobtrusively by the evaluator. If a program were to be evaluated on only one criterion framework, such an evaluation could well be disregarded by other audiences. It seems to be more prudent to anticipate this problem and respond to it in the evaluation design and report.

A further problem lies in the level of performance or activity acceptable to an audience. It is possible to establish a criterion level which is acceptable to only a small group of persons or to a limited number of roles in the educational community. Desired performance levels may vary within an audience. Rather than reporting information which results from applying a simple criterion level, we must attempt to provide alternatives

--reporting all data so that re-analysis can be performed, reporting information resulting from application of several criterion levels, etc.

The operational definition being used is:

> Educational evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives.

I have spoken briefly about the relationship of evaluation to decision-making, of the information-providing role of evaluation, and the concept of educational community as multiple decision-makers--and audiences for evaluative information.

Why have a Department of Evaluation?

It should be evident at this point that evaluation, as a systematic, scientific process should be performed. It may not be as evident that decision-makers, though they evaluate every day, are not likely to be able or inclined to perform the systematic evaluation which we have been discussing. It is a rare decision-maker who can dispassionately view a program or situation in which he is involved.

The evaluator (and I use the term collectively, whether it be one or thirty) who works only for, or under one decision-maker has a narrow, limited audience, and will prepare reports for that audience which are likely to be as narrow or limited. However, if the evaluator is established separately, if he has an identity which is not linked too closely to any one audience, he will be capable of being more objective, or at least, broader in perspective. Evaluators must be able to relate across many different groups of people which may have quite divergent views.

Since there is a general acceptance that "he who holds information has power," the evaluator is both threatening and at the same time perhaps subject to pressure. If he has a degree of autonomy and demonstrates his "fairness" or "objectivity" he is less likely to be threatening and less likely to be pressured. He must be able to obtain information, and also be at a level where he has an understanding of what's going on around him --"the big picture." He should have access to the decision-making power structure so that he can identify information needed for those decisions.

I earlier provided the Dictionary of Social Sciences definition of accountability, reviewed some of the press for accountability in the Columbus community, the recommendations of the OSU Advisory Commission for an "accountability arm," and the initial stages of staffing the department. I talked about accountability, information, and evaluation, hopefully linking these to decision-making, all leading up to a rationale for an office charged with that responsibility.

Now I'd like to make a stab at a definition of accountability:

> Accountability is the willingness to provide information and develop the capacity thereof by an agency on the extent to which the commitments of the agency are being met, and the responsiveness of that agency to the concerns of the educational community in selecting, pursuing and reviewing its goals and objectives.

I believe that accountability has to be a positive action rather than a defensive ploy. An agency, no matter how proper, must be perceived to be accountable. It cannot just say, "We're being accountable" unless the community finds such a statement to be credible. The agency must not only say, "We're willing," but must demonstrate its ability to be accountable, by recognizable action. The next stage may be even more difficult. I hear,

over and over again, the comment "You've given us all this information, beautiful charts, facts and figures, but we want to know, what are you going to do about it?" The second part of the definition included the phrase ". . . responsiveness of that agency to the concerns of the educational community in selecting, pursuing, and reviewing its goals and objectives." This means the agency will tune in the community, and listen to its concerns.

I should point out that this is a working definition, derived from experience.

What have we done to operationalize accountability?

First, the system made a commitment to accountability by putting up General Fund, local money to support the department.

Second, the system established personnel policies which made it possible to hire competent personnel for non-administrative roles at competitive salaries.

Third, the system established acccuntability-type policies. These include:

1. A policy which requires a standardized testing program, comparable across schools and grade levels.

2. A policy which requires a published annual report to the community on student performance on a school by school basis.

3. A policy which provides parents with access to performance records of their child on the tests administered, and the student himself, as well.

4. A policy which established survey committees, consisting of elected students, community people, parents and faculty members, at each school, whose function is to serve in an advisory capacity, to facilitate communication between school

administration and students, teachers, parents and citizens. Meetings are open to other students, teachers and citizens to bring their concerns to the committee.

5. A policy calling for follow-up of graduate careers, to include data on school performance and post high school activity, as well as feedback from the graduates themselves.

The seeds of these policies can be found in the basic recommendations of the OSU Advisory Commission. On the whole, the school system could be said to have met these recommendations well. I'd like to mention some of the other areas in which we've been working.

Student unrest resulted in some unfortunate incidents in the Spring of 1969 in several of our secondary schools. In one building, many students engaged in a sit-down strike, were hauled off to jail. This action resulted in reaction, and it was clear that a plan to cope with student unrest was needed. As the plan developed to handle student unrest, it was clear that we should also plan to prevent student unrest. The resulting student relations policy is two-fold: the first section deals with things the school must do to provide for student concerns, to assess student attitudes, to provide legitimate channels of communication for students, to insure broad representation of the student body in student government, etc. The second part of the policy is to prevent escalation of student unrest, if the first part of the policy fails; finally, the policy provides for moderate handling of eruptions which have not been prevented. Note that building administrators, faculties, parents and students all have responsibilities and rights which are being recognized. Also note the building administrator is accountable for having taken the preventative measures.

Another step in accountability was taken last year when the Board of

Education agreed in professional negotiations with the Columbus Education Association to an annual building evaluation, to be conducted by faculties, on a form to be jointly developed by the Board and the CEA. This evaluation was to cover professional environment, staff support, student relations, and co-curricular activities. Our office developed the instrument used, aided in its administration, and are now developing a system-wide report for the Board. The faculties each reported to their principal and the CEA their findings. I'd note parenthetically that we made a lot of friends with teachers during that experience, but alienated a lot of building principals.

We are now in the process of reciprocating. The Board and the CEA have agreed to adopt a new evaluation system of teachers, which we have been given the responsibility for developing. This is partially in response to demands from the community that teachers be accountable, and partially in response to the need for information to make decisions about re-hiring, terminating and promoting to tenured status.

Our system is plagued with over-crowding, a defeated building proposal and an interest in the space-saving economics attributed to the Year Around School. As part of the accountability policy, we are now engaged in a comprehensive study of the Year Around School, on which the Board will base their decision.

Accountability extends to all Board of Education meetings, Committee of the Whole meetings and sub-committee meetings being open to the public and the media. We are all learning how to do business in public.

Much of what has been said relates to total system activities and policies. I'd like to deal for a while with the kind of policies which

permit a capability for accountability to exist.

Policies

First, and perhaps the most important, is the need to be completely open and honest with the department. They must know what's going on so that they can anticipate information needs. The department must also be credible to all its audiences, all those members of the educational community. This demands an openness of reporting or the right to publish evaluation findings in their unexpurgated form--both good and bad, while at the same time, sensitizing administrators to the findings so that they can provide a well thought out response.

Second, the department must have unlimited access to data in the system, with the understanding that individual data, such as reports on teachers and students will not be revealed publicly.

Third, the department must be involved in setting its priorities, but these priorities must be congruent to the goals of the system.

Fourth, the department must have budgetary support for systematic evaluation and research. Up to 1 per cent of total system budget has been recommended, similar to R & D budgets of industry. Separate budgets for mandated, funded projects (Title I) may run 5-7 per cent of the budget. Our office never got to the 1 per cent level. We were operating at about a five-tenths of one per cent level. However, the system is now in a state of budget deficit, so we lost the equivalent of 6 1/2 professionals from our General Fund operations.

Keep in mind that evaluation costs are also opportunity costs. You may save thousands of dollars over several years by having evaluative

information about programs. You may avoid costly program investments with low payoffs, or be able to terminate or modify such programs before they become costly mistakes. Or you may be able to maintain the public's confidence that a course of action being followed is the best of available strategies.

Fifth, the department must have competent personnel. It is important to recruit, train and retain the personnel necessary to perform the task at hand. I would like to make a case for evaluation, or accountability personnel, as being different. They're not classroom teachers on special assignment, they're not guidance counselors doing program evaluation, they're not principals who have retired from the battleground. They are competent specialists, rather than generalists. They have probably received some specialized training, or should receive such training, to meet the information providing needs of their position. Universities should be doing more to train evaluation personnel to work in the field. More evaluators are now being trained in the field, on the job, than in our graduate schools. This could easily be a collaborative venture of an educational administration faculty, a research and evaluation faculty, and the public schools near the universities.

It is essential to foster collaborative relationships between the universities and public school systems. There are evaluation activities and developmental tasks which are beyond the means of either institution operating solo. There is a need for on the job, field training of evaluators, through a device such as we have used--the internship. They receive, in addition to their formal classroom training, on the job training, a reality orientation; and we receive a source of personnel, a recruiting mechanism,

and a major source of ideas. I regret to say that the budget cuts have reduced our internships to zero, with no restoration in sight.

School systems must consider other policies for evaluation to be successful and for accountability to work effectively and efficiently. One of these deals with the utilization of extant data wherever possible. This means generating a standardized data base that can be counted on and called upon, that data can be retrieved from, effortlessly and painlessly.

The evaluator must have access to information in the system if the decision-maker is to utilize the data in making decisions. How often is data ignored if it is not readily available, or available only after the fact? Some data can be used, over and over again, for many different purposes. For example, we have computerized the beginnings of a student file, which includes standardized test information. This data is used for preparing individual pupil profiles of test results, and made available to teachers, counselors, principals, parents--and even the students. We have found ways to present the data so that the old business of releasing a point estimate of a test result is no longer a problem. We use the same master file to summarize information for each classroom and for buildings. We are ready to provide, on an optional basis, an item analysis of standardized test results to classroom teachers, and to curriculum specialists, as well as scoring and returning teacher made tests along with such an analysis.

We use the same data for the School Profile, the building by building summarization of test results and other factors published and made freely available to the community.

Finally, the same data is utilized in context evaluation for identifying problem areas, used as a basis for proposal writing for Title I projects,

and for allocating resources within the school system.

The evaluator not only has to have access to the information in the system and the mechanisms for creating data, but he must have access to the decision-making structure. He must interact with the decision-makers in delineating information needs. He must help the decision-maker anticipate what information will be needed in the future.

Since the evaluator is dealing with information which may be negative to the maintenance portion of the system, he must have a measure of autonomy from the maintenance parts of the organization--for protection, as well as to maintain credibility for accountability. My colleagues in the system may not always appreciate this, but to have evaluation reports labeled as credible is a very important part of the strategy of accountability. The day when major sectors of the educational community mistrust or disbelieve accounts from our office, I have lost my usefulness and will have to be replaced by someone who is credible.

Does a Department of Evaluation do everything related to information?

Our definition of educational evaluation--the process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives--this definition might lead one to believe that evaluation and the Department of Evaluation is attempting to deal with, and in fact control, all the information a decision-maker uses. Nothing could be further from the truth. Educational evaluation is, in fact, just one more way of knowing. To be of utility, educational evaluation must provide information which is not available by other means, cannot be obtained at lower cost otherwise, and is useful in the judging of decision alternatives. While

evaluators may at times sound like the answer to all our problems, we are not and indeed can do no more than help in the solution of problems toward the improvement of education.

The Department of Evaluation and Research has both a

Direct Services Role
and a
Facilitating Services Role

which provides the system with: a direct capacity to perform evaluation and research, and a facility to help others in the system, such as

building principals
faculty
curriculum specialists
supervisors
project directors to evaluate

The department, in essence, holds "the Goodhousekeeping" Seal of Approval for evaluations--to ensure that the accountability is credible, reliable, valid.

Processes

Our department is concerned with building mechanisms into the system to provide a priori evaluations wherever possible

Computer based student file
Computer based teacher file

In-service training for professional staff

Dissemination
Feedback of reports to sources: audiences
- Item analysis to classroom teachers and building principals
- Information to community on neighborhood seminars
- School profile--individual school profiles--printed 200,000, taken home by every child

Establishing survey committees in every school, which are both data sources, and information users.

Interfaces
with the educational community
- Administrators
- Parents
- Public
- Students
- Teachers

Many evaluation activities are of an ad hoc or special purpose nature. The damand for our direct services in evaluation far exceeds our capacity and will continue to do so. Recognizing this, we have established several developmental task areas which are intended to extend the capacity of our department to serve the information needs of the schoo' system. We are attempting to utilize the concept used by financial institutions and holding companies which is called leverage. Our intent is to increase the evaluation capacity of the system without a directly proportionate increase in cost. We have chosen to do this because we are assuming a model of scarce resources; among others funding is limited, personnel are limited, and space is limited. Either one sets priorities and only attacks problems with the highest priority, or uses leverage or a combination of both. Our concept of leverage works like this: many evaluations, Title I, State DP, the School Profile, etc., require the same or similar data. Much of this data is already being created and collected for some purpose in the system already. We are working on a systematic identification of extant data which our office can utilize. This, of course, is one of the first steps in a systems analysis. We have developed a standardized testing program to fit the needs of teachers and counselors and also provide our office with approximately 75 per cent of our testing requirements for Title I through this step alone.

Having some direct involvement with program evaluation, such as Title I, provides us with a training and testing ground for evaluation personnel

and techniques. Once tried and modified as necessary, a technique can then be used by other persons in the school system with the knowledge that it will work. Thus, we are able to provide consultants on evaluation to the school system at large. These field team consultants have the responsibility for helping personnel in the field, such as principals, teachers, curriculum supervisors, etc., with evaluation designs, instrumentation, data reduction, analysis and reporting. However, the responsibility for conducting these ad hoc evaluations will remain with the school. We are hopeful that our field consultants will also be training persons in the many different offices of the school system, through an "on the job" training experience, so that, when they are through, they have a greater understanding of, appreciation for, and usage of evaluation. We are trying to work ourselves out of business by training others to "do it themselves."

Products

Typical products of our department include:

The Columbus School Profile

The Columbus Testing Profile and its data by products

The Student Opinion Survey

The Building Evaluation System

The Neighborhood Seminar Reports

The Graduate Follow-Up Study

Voter Intention Surveys

Special Program Evaluation Reports

Mandated Evaluation Reports

Phenomena

Results of School Profile and other activities:

The large problems (system-wide) are broken into smaller ones (building level).

The credibility of the school system is improving.

Decisions are more informed--
Neighborhood Seminar recommendations
Survey Committees in secondary schools
Voter Intention Surveys

Higher degrees of data utilization--not just flowing from bottom up, but flowing back to the source of information.

Removal of myths, assumptions, for example, the transfer and assignment of teachers.

Dealing with substantive questions, not with questions of accountability.

The Department of Evaluation and Research has a tenuous, shifting base of support. We are not winning popularity contests. Theoretically, we should be able to convince everyone that we are there to help them do their job more effectively. Practically speaking, we threaten them.

We have to look at the success of the school system over the past two years in beginning to be accountable, and not suffering as much from being accountable as when we were not being accountable.

We have to look at the last school year and the significant improvement in the degree of student unrest.

We have to look at the total educational community and its beginning efforts to work with the school system to improve educational opportunities.

We find in these things some very real hope that accountability will work, the school system will improve and the community will benefit.